

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed January 8, 2007, and the Advisory Action mailed March 16, 2007. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the subject application as amended herein.

Claims 1-6, 8-20, and 22-27 remain in the present application. Claims 7 and 21 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claims 4 and 5 stand allowed.

Claims 18 and 19 were allowable but objected to based on the use of the term "machine" in the preambles. Applicant has amended claims 18 and 19 as suggested by the Examiner to place claims 18 and 19 in condition for allowance.

REPLY TO ADVISORY ACTION COMMENTS

Applicant apologizes for the confusion surrounding the terms "brightness level" and "brightness setting." Perhaps the best way to clear-up the confusion is to return to Page 4 of the specification, where a central theme of the application is described.

On page 4, lines 10-21, the application describes a backlight that can operate at a variety of different power levels, and a voltage inverter that can supply power to the backlight in two different modes of operation, continuous mode and burst mode. The voltage inverter tends to be more efficient in the continuous mode when supplying higher power levels, and the voltage inverter tends to be more efficient in the burst mode when supplying lower power levels.

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Furthermore, page 4, lines 24-26 state that the power level of the backlight may be unknown, or even unknowable. That is, the backlight may not provide a feedback power level signal.

In which case, page 4, lines 27-31, state a central theme of the application. Specifically, the application states, "Embodiments of the present invention, however, take advantage of the fact that the brightness of a display is often closely related to the input driving power level of the backlight. That is, embodiments of the present invention can select a mode of operation for a backlight voltage inverter based at least in part on the brightness setting of a display."

In other words, without directly determining the power level at which a display's backlight is actually operating, embodiments of the present invention use the brightness setting of the display to select a mode of operation for the backlight's voltage inverter. Throughout the remainder of the application, Applicant intended to use the terms "brightness level" and "brightness setting" to refer to the brightness of the display, as opposed to the power level of the display's backlight. In retrospect, Applicant may have been better off consistently using a term such as "the level of brightness setting for the display," but Applicant respectfully submits that the description is adequate to enable one skilled in the art.

The Examiner noted at least two specific incidents (page 8, lines 25-28 and page 9, lines 3-7) in which Applicant described switching the voltage inverter's modes of operation based on a "brightness level of the backlight."

However, given that a central theme of the application is that embodiments of the invention do not use the power level of the backlight, Applicant respectfully submits that the term "brightness level", even in the cited sentence, is clearly referring to something other than the power level of the backlight. Applicant may have been more precise using the phrase "brightness level of the display," but since the display's brightness is directly related to the amount of light provided by the backlight, Applicant respectfully submits that the description is adequate to enable a person skilled in the art to understand that "brightness level" and "brightness setting" are referring to the same thing, even when used in conjunction with either "display" or "backlight."

For example, virtually anyone, whether skilled in the art or not, understands that pressing the brightness buttons on a notebook computer will change how bright the display appears. And, virtually anyone, whether skilled in the art or not, may interchangeably use the terms "brightness level" or "brightness setting" to refer how bright that display appears. Furthermore, anyone skilled in the art understands that those changes to the brightness of the display are usually caused by changes in the amount of light supplied by a backlight in the display. So, clearly, changing the "brightness setting" or "brightness level" of either the "display" or "backlight" is sufficiently descriptive to enable one skilled in the art to understand the embodiments of the invention.

The Examiner also noted in the March 13, 2007 Advisory Action that Applicant amended the claims from reciting "brightness level for a backlight" to "brightness setting for a display" in response to a 103 rejection. This amendment

apparently gave the Examiner the impression that the two phrases were intended to have different meanings. Lin was the central reference in the 103 rejection that prompted the amendment. Lin described using a voltage and/or current feedback signal from the backlight to adjust the voltage and/or current supplied to the backlight. The claimed invention, however, has absolutely nothing to do with using a feedback signal from a backlight. Applicant thought the Examiner was interpreting the plain meaning of "brightness level for a backlight" so broadly as to include voltage and/or current conditions at the backlight.

Applicant deliberated about how to respond to the rejection. Of the two terms "brightness level for a backlight" and "brightness setting for a display", Applicant felt that the plain meaning of "brightness setting for a display" made the distinction with Lin more clearly than trying to argue against the Examiner's apparent interpretation of the plain meaning of "brightness level for a backlight." In other words, the amendment was merely a tactical choice - a failed attempt to select what Applicant assumed would be the more straightforward response to focus the Examiner's attention on the clear distinction between the claimed invention and the reference.

At no time did Applicant intend to argue or assert that "brightness level for a backlight" and "brightness setting for a display" have different meanings in the context of the present application, which clearly they do not. Applicant merely made the amendment based on an assumption about the Examiner's plain meaning interpretation in light of Lin.

Given the central theme of the present application, and the overall context in which the terms "brightness level" and "brightness setting" have been used, Applicant hopes that any confusion about the two terms has been cleared-up. Furthermore, Applicant respectfully submits that the Specification clearly enables the claimed embodiments of the present invention for one skilled in the art. If the Examiner continues to be confused by the use of these two terms, Applicant respectfully requests a telephone interview to address the issue.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

In the January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, claims 15-21 were objected for using the word "machine" in the preambles. Applicant has amended the preambles as suggested by the Examiner. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments overcome the objection.

35 USC 112 REJECTIONS

In the January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, claims 1-3, 6-17, and 20-27 were rejected under 35 USC 112, first paragraph. This rejection is based on a perceived distinction between the two terms "brightness setting" and "brightness level." As Applicant has explained above at length, there is no distinction between the meanings of the two terms in the context of the present application. The two terms can and are used interchangeably in the specification in connection with either a display or backlight to mean the same thing. At no time

has Applicant argued or asserted that the two terms have different meanings in the context of the present application.

Moreover, Applicant has made amendments to clearly convey the claimed subject matter. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection has been overcome.

35 USC 103 REJECTIONS

In the January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, claims 1-2, 6-11, 13-14, 22-24, and 26-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,936,975 issued to Lin et al. (hereinafter "Lin") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,724,174 issued to Esteves et al. (hereinafter "Esteves"). Claim 7 has been cancelled without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejection of claim 7 moot. Applicant has amended the remaining claims to clearly distinguish over the cited references. For example, amended claim 1 states:

A method comprising:
receiving a level of brightness setting for a display, said display having a backlight driven by a voltage inverter; and
selecting either a continuous mode of operation for the voltage inverter or a burst mode of operation for the voltage inverter based on the level of brightness setting for the display.

In claim 1, a backlight for a display is driven by a voltage inverter. The voltage inverter can be operated in two different modes. The method selects between the two modes based on the level of the brightness setting for the display.

In contrast, Lin describes generating a feedback signal that is indicative of the voltage and/or current conditions at a backlight, and using that feedback

signal to adjust the voltage and/or current supplied to the backlight (Lin: col. 4, lines 57-64). The Examiner stated in the Advisory Action mailed March 16, 2007:

A user can change the brightness setting on a display usually by pressing a button of the display and specifying the increase/decrease in brightness. Therefore since Lin changes modes based on the voltage of the backlight and the backlight voltage is based upon an indicated brightness of the screen, then the change in modes would be based AT LEAST IN PART on a brightness setting of a display as indicated by the user.

As discussed above however, a central theme of the present application is that the mode of operation is selected without using a feedback signal from the backlight, which is completely contrary to the teachings of Lin. Therefore, claim 1 has been amended to remove the language "an indicator" and "at least in part on the indicator." Amended claim 1 now simply selects the mode of operation "based on the level of brightness setting for the display."

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Lin does not suggest, disclose, or enable "selecting either ... mode of operation for the voltage inverter" based on "the level of brightness setting for the display," as claimed in amended claim 1.

Esteves was cited for teaching selecting between a continuous mode and a burst mode of operation (January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, Page 6).

Assuming for the sake of argument that the Final Office Action is correct with respect to the teachings of Esteves, Esteves is similar to Lin in that Esteves describes using a feedback signal from the output of a voltage regulator to select between the modes of operation (Esteves: col. 5, lines 4-29). Therefore,

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Applicant respectfully submits that Esteves does not cure the deficiencies of Lin as described above.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Lin in view of Esteves for at least the reasons discussed above.

Applicant respectfully submits that the reasoning presented above similarly applies to claims 2, 6, 8-11, 13-14, 22-24, and 26-27. Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2, 6, 8-11, 13-14, 22-24, and 26-27 are likewise patentable over Lin in view of Esteves.

In the January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, claims 3, 15-17, and 20-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lin in view of Esteves, further in view of U.S. Patent Application 2002/0118182 by Weindorf (hereinafter "Weindorf"). Claim 21 has been cancelled without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejection of claim 21 moot. Applicant respectfully submits that the reasoning presented above with respect to Lin and Esteves similarly applies to claims 3, 15-17, and 20. Furthermore, Weindorf is directed to adjusting display luminance as a function of ambient light (Weindorf: Para. 12). Applicant respectfully submits Weindorf has nothing whatsoever to do with selecting modes of operation for a backlight inverter, much less using a display's level of brightness setting to select among the modes. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Weindorf does not cure the deficiencies of Lin and Esteves as described above.

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Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that 3, 15-17, and 20 are patentable over Lin in view of Esteves, further in view of Weindorf, for at least the reasons discussed above.

In the January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, claims 12 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Lin in view of Esteves, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,750,842 issued to Yu (hereinafter "Yu"). Applicant respectfully submits that the reasoning presented above with respect to Lin and Esteves similarly applies to claims 12 and 25. Yu was cited for teaching "a backlight control circuit for a full-bridge circuit" (January 8, 2007 Final Office Action, Page 12). Assuming for the sake of argument that the Office Action is correct with respect to the teachings of Yu, Applicant respectfully submits Yu has nothing whatsoever to do with selecting modes of operation for a backlight inverter, much less using a display's level of brightness setting to select among the modes. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Yu does not cure the deficiencies of Lin and Esteves as described above. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12 and 25 are patentable over Lin in view of Esteves, further in view of Yu, for at least the reasons discussed above.

CONCLUSION

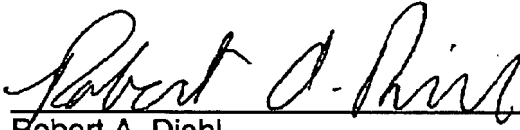
In conclusion, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-6, 8-20, and 22-27 are now in a condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests allowance of such claims.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overages to our Deposit Account No. 50-0221.

Respectfully submitted,

INTEL CORPORATION

Date: 5/8, 2007


Robert A. Diehl
Reg. No. 40,992

INTEL LEGAL
SC4-202
P.O. Box 5326
Santa Clara, CA 95056-5326
Phone: (503) 712-1880
FAX: (503) 264-1729

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